

## THE NAMES TROYAN AND BOYAN IN OLD RUSSIAN.

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The famous old Russian epic "The Tale of the Armament of Igor" (1185 A. D.), relating in striking form the exploits of the hosts of the ancient Russian Prince Igor Svyatoslávič, has been ably edited and translated by Leonard A. Magnus, LL.B. (Oxford University Press, 1915). The majority of the allusions in this poem are more or less clear historically, but the obscure references to Troyan and Boyan have been a matter of scientific discussion for over a century. The following brief exposition of this question may perhaps throw some additional light on the problem.

There are four references in the Igor-text to Troyan (cited by Magnus, p. xlix):

1. In the invocation to Boyan (lines 59 ff.), stating how Boyan might have sung on the subject treated by the author of the Igor epic:

*O Bóyane soloviju starogo vremeni<sup>1</sup>  
aby ty sia polki užčekotal  
skača slaviyu po myslenu drevu  
letaya umom pod oblaki  
svivaya slavy oba  
poly sego vremeni  
rišča v tropu Troyanyu  
čres pola ná gory*

O Boyan, nightingale of ancient times,  
had'st thou but warbled these hosts,  
leaping, O nightingale, through the  
tree of thought,  
flying in mind beneath the clouds,  
interweaving the glories of both  
halves of this time,  
rushing on the path of Troyan  
through the plains to the hills!

2. A reference to past events in connection with Troyan, lines 209 ff.:

*Byli věči (or sčči) Tróyani  
minula lěta Yaróslavlya  
byli polci Ól' govry*

There have been the ages (or battles) of Troyan;  
past are the years of Yaroslav;  
there have been the armies of Oleg.

<sup>1</sup> The system of transliteration herein adopted is based on the Croatian method, save that the Old Russian hard sign is indicated by ' , and the soft sign by ' .

## 3. Reference to the land of Troyan, lines 288 ff.:

<i>V'zstala obida</i>	Arose scandal
<i>v silach Daž'boga vnuka</i>	in the forces of Dažbog's offspring;
<i>vstupila dēvoyu</i>	stepped like a maiden
<i>na zēmyu Tróyanyu</i>	on the land of Troyan.

## 4. Allusion to the period of Troyan, lines 569 ff.:

<i>Na sed'móm věčě Tróyani</i>	In the seventh age of Troyan,
<i>vŕže Vsesláv zrebŭi</i>	Vseslav cast lot
<i>o dēvicyu sebě lyubu</i>	for a maiden dear to him.

It seems clear from the above four allusions that "Troyan" was used as the name of a country, thus: (1) the path of T.=the historical course of T.; (2—4) the "ages," probably not "battles" of T.; (3) land of T.; which settles the geographical sense. It is impossible to imagine that Troyan was a person from the above allusions.<sup>2</sup>

That the author of the Igor-Slovo<sup>3</sup> meant his own country "Russia" by "Troyan" seems quite evident, and this view has been advanced by many authorities, among them Magnus himself (op. cit., p. xlix), who notes, in connection with allusion No. 4 (see above), that there were just seven generations between the Scandinavian Rurik (Hrörekr), the founder of the first Russian dynasty, and the prince Vseslav herein mentioned. Such a deduction is comparatively easy, so far as the historical application of the term "Troyan" is concerned, but the problem as to the actual meaning of the term, apart from its application in the Slovo, is much more involved. Magnus (op. cit., pp. l-liii) cites five of the most generally held views, viz., (1) Troyan indicates some district outside of Russia; a view held only by few scholars; (2) Weltmann's opinion that "Troyan" should be read *Krayan* "borderland;" (3) "Troyan" is derived from the Roman emperor's name Trajan;

<sup>2</sup> The idea that Troyan was a divine person seems to have prevailed only in some of the later Slavonic myths (Louis Leger, "Mythologie Slave," p. 125), but this is probably an association with the Emperor Trajan, and not with the evidently geographical Troyan of the Slovo.

<sup>3</sup> The full title is: *Slovo o p'liku Igorevčě, Igorya Svyat'slavliča vnuka*, "Narrative of the Expedition of Igor, of Igor son of Svyatoslav," grandson of Oleg.

(4) Troyan = Trojan, embodying the Russian tradition of Homer; and (5) Troyan was the transferred name of an ancient Slavonic pagan deity.<sup>2</sup>

Discussing these theories briefly, it should be noted that there is no evidence that the Troyan of our Slovo was other than a poetical name for Russia in its application by the poet. The fact that there is to-day a place called Troyan in Bulgaria and a Troyan near Smolensk, etc., is no proof that these localities are named from the same stem as the Troyan of the Slovo, which distinctly includes all the Russia of that day. Furthermore, the change of text, suggested by Weltmann, may be summarily dismissed as being too arbitrary (thus, also Magnus, p. 1).

It is highly likely that we have in the name "Troyan" a mixture of philological traditions, *i. e.*, that it is a combination-reproduction of the Roman "Trajan" and the Greek "Trojan," both which opinions are indicated above. In this supposed compound tradition, the Greek element must be regarded as predominating. Magnus cites (p. 1, from Sederholm) a *bylina*<sup>4</sup> of the reign of Catherine II., in which there is a direct allusion to the road of the emperor Trajan (*na doróge na Trayánovoï*), containing the *a* vowel (cf. also Magnus, loc. cit. on the miracle of Pope Clement), but the forms *Troyan tsar' Yermalanskii* (= *rimlyanskii* "Roman") occur in south Russian documents, and, moreover, there are other evidences of the Trajan tradition in northern and eastern Slavonic lore. This fact, in itself, is not sufficient, however, to account for the evident use of "Troyan," to indicate ancient Russia. Magnus holds (p. 1) that "Troyan" is derived from the numeral three (*tróye*), referring to the three Scandinavian brothers Rurik, Sineus and Truvor,<sup>5</sup> who founded Russia (Nestor 6370). Such an idea seems rather far-fetched, as Troyan is often used as a nickname for the third son, similarly to Latin *Tertius*, *Decimus*, etc. But there is

<sup>4</sup> The term *bylina* indicates the Russian folk-tale, of which thousands are still in existence, usually in rude meter. These productions are nearly always intoned in chant-form (Rimsky-Kórsakov, "Chants Nationaux Russes," Part I, 1876).

<sup>5</sup> The names Rurik and Truvor are Slavonianisms, respectively, from Old Norse *Hrörek* and *Thorvarðr* (guardian of the gate). Many Old Russian names are pure Scandinavian (cf. Magnus, p. viii).

no historical evidence that Rurik was the third brother of the triad. In fact, in the legend, he always occupies the first place.<sup>6</sup>

It is much more probable that we have in the "Trojan" of the Slovo no distinctive Slavonic legend at all, but rather, as already indicated, the mixed tradition of the Roman "Trajan" and the Hellenic Homer. To this Magnus objects that the "landlocked state of mediæval Russia" could hardly have imported very much of this (Greek) tradition, as the road to Constantinople was blocked by Pólovtsi and Bulgars, and the Catholic powers of the northwest were all hostile. Magnus forgets, however, that the inherent tradition of the early Russian church was essentially Greek. Early metropolitans of Kiev, down to the period of the Mongol invasion, were usually Greeks who had been consecrated at Constantinople. The first important Russian metropolitan, who established the essentially Russian character of the church and nations, was St. Peter (1308-1328) of Vladímir. It is highly interesting in this connection to note that, in the first half of the twelfth century, a Russian writer excused himself before his sovereign for *not* having studied Homer, when he was young! The Chronicler of Volhynia (1232) cites a verse attributed to Homer, which has not been retained in our current version. Literate Russians of this period were evidently familiar with the tale of the Trojan war through the works of Tryphiodore, Kolouthos, etc. (Rimbaud, "La Russie Épique," p. 408).

It is well known from Russian records that the father of Monomákh, Vsévolod, who had never been in foreign lands, knew no less than five languages. In the Slovo itself (lines 353-4) we read: *tu greci i moráva poyût slavu Svyatósławlyu* "here the Greeks and Moravians sing the glory of Svyatoslav," showing that the author knew something about the Greeks.

In connection with the work of the Columbia University Slavonic Department, Dr. Clarence A. Manning has collected a number of possible Homeric and other Greek parallels with the Slovo, which show a very decided Hellenic influence on the formation of this poem;

<sup>6</sup> Note that in the year 862, Rurik as leader of the Váriags (Varangians) was invited to defend the northern Russian princes.



they are incorporated herewith together with Dr. Manning's comments, as throwing an interesting light on the problem.

Slovo, 11: "as a gray wolf" = Il., x, 334: *πολιδος λύκος*. Slovo 12: "as a dusky eagle" = Il., xxi, 252: *αἰετοῦ-μέλανος*.

Manning compares also the passage already cited above of the invocation of the poet Boyan, with Euripides, Helena, 1107 ff.: "thee who hast a tuneful seat in the leafy halls, thee I invoke, thee, most musical bird, mournful nightingale, come, O associate of my laments, trilling through thy tawny throat," etc. The resemblance between this passage and the Igor-lines is very striking, although, as Manning points out, it is doubtful whether Euripides was actually invoking Homer.

Slovo, 74: "offspring of Veles" (the ancient Slavonic cattle god); Theocritus, xxiv, 105, states that Linus, a mythical poet, was the son of Apollo. Slovo, 84: "swift horses" = Il., viii, 88; *θοαὶ ἵπποι*.

Slovo, 175: "the winds, scions of Stríbog" = Odyss., x, 1 ff.: "the winds, the sons of Æolus."

Slovo, 186-189: "the mad children blocked the fields with their shouting, but the brave Russians barred them with their crimsoned shields." With this, cf. Slovo, 435: "for these without shields with hunting-knives conquer the hosts by their shouting," and contrast Il., iii, 2-9: "The Trojans went with a shout and cry like birds, like the cry of cranes against the sky."

Slovo, 224: "To the Judgment Seat" (*na sud*); probably of Christian origin.

Slovo, 238: "(Russia) the scion of Dažbog"<sup>7</sup> seems to point to the Russians being a chosen people; an idea probably of Biblical origin, through the Biblical Greek.

Slovo, 374: "in my golden-roofed hall;" clearly a translation of the Byzantine *χρησόκεραμος*.

Slovo, 479: "On thy gold forged throne;" cf. Euripides, Phoen., 220: *χρυσότευκτος*.

<sup>7</sup> Dažbog, the rain or storm god, was probably the Russian equivalent of the Scandinavian Thor, who was the patron of the warlike Scandinavian founders of Russia (see above, note 5).

<sup>8</sup> The meaning of these lines is very obscure.

Slovo, 546-548: "the birds, O Prince, have been covering thy host with their wings and the wild beasts have been licking at their blood;" cf. Il., I., 4-5: "they made them a spoil for the dogs, a feast for the birds of prey."

In the Greek legend, Achilles was early associated with the Euxine and especially with the island of Leuke at the mouth of the Danube. Here he lived after death with Helen as his consort, along with other heroes. Leonymos of Croton was the first to sail thither to be cured of his wound by Ajax, and Helen told him to go to Stesichoros and say that she was angry at him for making her, in his poetry, elope with Paris (Pausanias, III., 19, 11-13); cf. Eurip. Andr., 1260 ff. Further east at the mouth of the Borysthenes (Dniepr), there was another island sacred to Achilles (Λχιλλήϊος δρόμος) mentioned by Herod., iv, 53; Strabo, vii, 307. Achilles also had a temple at Olbia (Dio. Chrys., xxxvi, 439 ff.). Furthermore, in the Crimea, there was a temple in which Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, was placed by Artemis as priestess with the duty of sacrificing strangers (Her., iv, 103; Pausanias, I., 43, 1). This may have been connected with the account of the Scythian snake goddess (Her., iv, 9). We should note also that the maiden was one of the most important deities in the Chersonese (Minus, Greeks and Scythians, p. 543). She is probably identical with the Dēvica, Slovo, 571. Helen is the symbol of discord also in the systems of St. Irenæus and the Gnostics (Rambaud, op. cit., p. 413).

There is every probability that Obida "discord" and Dēvica "the maiden" of the Slovo represent the legend of Helen, child of the swan. Such legends could easily have been carried in a Byzantine form to the Russians by the ecclesiastics, in spite of their "landlocked" state in this early period, for the church was already there, as amply demonstrated in the Slovo. The objection that some aspects of this legend may have been inherent among the Slavonic tribes on the north shore of the Black Sea, and that the Greeks themselves may have borrowed some of their material, does not carry much weight, as the Slovo indications are too markedly Hellenic to admit of such a view.

The question remains to be solved, as to why the early Russians

applied the term "Trojan" = "Trojan" to their own country and people. This use must have been suggested by the similarly sounding name Boyan, the legendary Slavonic poet, whose name appears only in the Igor-Slovo and there only six times (cf. Magnus, *op. cit.*, xlvi). The allusions are as follows:

(1) Line 6: *po zamýšleniýu Bóyanyu* "according to the invention of Boyan."

(2) Lines 8 ff.: *Boyán bo věščii ašče komu* *chotyaše pēs'n' tvoriti*, etc.  
Boyán, the seer, when for anyone he wished to make a song, etc.

(3) Lines 59-66: See above under the allusions to Troyan (1), where Boyan is described as "rushing on the path of Troyan."

(4) Line 74: *Věščēi Bóyane Vēlesov vnuče* O Wizard Boyan, scion of Veles!

(5) Lines 605-611: *Tomu věščēi (Bóyane) i pervoe pripěvku smyšleny reče: ni pticyu ni gub'cyu<sup>8</sup> ni pticyu ni gub'cyu<sup>8</sup> suda Božiya ne minuti* To him, O seer Boyan, the first refrain with thought thou didst speak: neither the crafty one, nor the experienced, nor a bird, nor a minstrel(?) can escape God's judgment.

(6) Lines 745-747: *Reče Boyan i chody Svyat'slavy na Kogana: pēsnotvor'c az starago vremeni* Boyan has told of the raids of Svyatoslav against the Kogan: the songmaker am I of olden time.

Magnus (pp. xlv ff.) gives the chief opinions regarding Boyan; viz., (1) that Boyan is a common Bulgarian name, citing the quotation by Paucker of tales of a Tsarévich Boyan Simenovich. That our Boyan is connected with this legendary being is extremely unlikely, as there is no evidence that this Bulgarian Boyan was a noted poet. In fact, the Bulgarian name is probably an echo of our Boyan. (2) Boyan has been found in some of the later lists of pagan Slavonic deities. This use of Boyan is probably a mere deification of the poet mentioned in the Slovo. (3) Dubenski mentions a hymn of Boyan of Bus, in which the instructor of Boyan gives his name as a descendant of the Slovenes, the son of Zlogor,

the long-lived minstrel of ancient tales. This hymn, as Dubenski points out, is of untrustworthy character, but in my opinion it embodies the tradition of the poet Boyan of the Slovo. (4) Magnus follows Weltmann's view, that Boyan is a contraction of some such phrase as *reče bo Yan* "then Yan spake," referring to the Yan mentioned by Nestor, as an aged man of ninety years, from whom the chronicler learned many legends. It is highly unlikely that so persistent a name as Boyan could be the result of such a contraction, as the nature of the particle *bo* was perfectly well known to chroniclers and copyists and it is improbable that it could have appeared in a fortuitous contraction without the knowledge even of an unintelligent copyist or recorder. Magnus seeks to show that the Yan alluded to by Nestor was born in the reign of Vladimir I. (1015 A. D.) and that he was a writer and took an active part in all the events of his day. In this way, he thinks, this Yan might well be described as "rushing on the path of Troyan" = "Russia." But surely no person, even in a life-time, no matter how long, could earn the right to be mentioned as covering the entire history of a nation. And yet this is how our Boyan of the Slovo is treated. Furthermore, there is no evidence that this Yan, although he was a writer, was a bard of such distinction as our Boyan is claimed to be in the above allusions to him in the Slovo, whose writer evidently regards Boyan as the one great poet of the world.

The most characteristic point about Boyan is the statement that he was a seer and, above all, a poet-singer, which naturally suggests the derivation of the name from *bayat'* "speak, relate" (from which we also have *basn'* fable). This is the opinion of Vyázemski and, I believe, the most reasonable theory in view of the apparent impossibility of other derivations of the name. Boyan has been variously derived from *boiti* = *vestí boi* "fight; carry on a fight"; and *boyát'sya* "to fear," neither of which roots seem to agree with the character of Boyan. It is highly probable that the name Boyan was a term deliberately applied to the function of this legendary person rather than a proper name of arbitrary meaning which happened to be the name of a poet. We may assume this to be the case, owing to the undoubted Hellenic influence seen in the Slovo and



discussed above under Troyan. The ancient Slavonic world abounded in singers similar to the Celtic bards and the Scandinavian skalds, and, granted a word Boyan-Bayan—"singer, poet, sayer," already existing in the popular language, the author of the Slovo probably introduced the Troyan-epithet, to indicate Russia by assonance with Boyan. Boyan was for the author of the Slovo the poet *par excellence*, who had given the ancient norm of Russian song, the traditions regarding whom are unknown to the modern world. It is highly likely, therefore, that Troyan—having in itself a basis of "Trojan" with a possible superimposition of the later "Trajan" influence—was used for the country, of which the then known Boyan sang, *i. e.*, of Russia. Even if it be supposed that Boyan was Magnus's somewhat dubious Yan, the principle of association remains the same; viz., it was necessary to have behind the Slavonianized Hellenic influence of the Slovo poem some poet-name—and a name in assonance with Troyan would naturally suggest itself—so that, in a sense, our Boyan is really an echo of Homer himself, although perhaps not consciously Homer in the mind of the author of the Slovo. Vyázemski held that Boyan was unequivocally Homer, but it is not necessary to imagine that the ancient author of the Slovo had so direct a tradition, in order to account for the divine Boyan, who is especially made the descendant of the essentially Slavonic Veles, the god of cattle.